United Nations A/54/484

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 October 1999

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 31
Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. On 7 December 1998, the General Assembly adopted resolution 53/91 in which, *inter alia*, it took note of the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (A/53/419) and requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the development of cooperation between the OAU and the organizations of the United Nations system.

II. Consultations and exchange of information

2. The Secretaries-General of the United Nations and OAU have, especially since January 1997, expanded and strengthened the framework for cooperation between the two organizations. They have established a regular pattern of exchange of information and mutual briefings on key African questions with a view to coordinating initiatives and action. They have held discussions on the mechanisms that should be put in place to enhance their joint capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa and for coordinating their efforts in that regard. They took an important step in this connection when they agreed, in January 1997, to hold regular meetings twice a year, along with their senior advisers, to discuss priority areas of cooperation and to coordinate their efforts. Subsequently, they reached an understanding that the meetings would take place immediately following the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government early in the General Assembly session to exchange views on key African issues of common interest and concern.

3. The first such meeting was held in Harare on 3 June 1997 during the OAU summit. Since then, the Secretaries-General and their advisers have met in New York in October 1997, in Addis Ababa in April 1998 and in New York in July 1998. Meetings were also held during the OAU summit in Algiers in July 1999 and in New York in September 1999; the New York meeting was preceded by preparatory meetings attended by representatives of bodies and organizations of the United Nations system.

4. In addition to the exchanges between the Secretaries-General during the annual assemblies of their two organizations, it was decided in 1998 that biennial consultations should be held at the highest level to decide on the details of the programme of cooperation that would be implemented during the following two years. Quarterly meetings of the United Nations system are held to follow up on the implementation of the decisions taken. Meetings are also held with OAU at the technical level to review the implementation of these decisions.

5. In this regard, a meeting between the secretariats of the United Nations system and OAU, co-chaired by the Assistant Secretaries-General for Political Affairs of the two organizations, was held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 May 1998 to review the implementation of the programmes of cooperation and to agree on follow-up action. At the meeting proposals were made for wide-ranging measures to consolidate cooperation between the two organizations and to enhance the capacity of OAU in various areas of its work. The next biennial meeting will be held in Addis Ababa in 2000. The two secretariats are currently in the process of selecting a suitable date.

6. At the recommendation of the Secretary-General and following approval by the General Assembly, a United Nations liaison office with OAU was established in Addis Ababa in April 1998 to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. Since its establishment, the liaison office has facilitated the exchange of information and the coordination of initiatives and efforts in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking as well as in the democratization and peace-building processes in Africa. The office has the responsibility of coordinating the implementation, in Addis Ababa, of programmes of cooperation between the United Nations system and OAU agreed to at the annual meetings of their secretariats. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) has seconded a staff member to the liaison office. Other United Nations departments have yet to do so. The Secretariat is in the process of reviewing the present capacity of the liaison office in order to equip it with the resources required to meet the increasing challenges of several peace processes in Africa in which the United Nations is collaborating with OAU.

III. Cooperation in the areas of peace and security

A. Department of Political Affairs

7. The United Nations Department of Political Affairs is responsible for the programme of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements. It organizes biannual meetings, in close consultation with the regional organizations, which are chaired by the

Secretary-General and attended by the heads of the organizations. Such a meeting was held at United Nations Headquarters on 28 and 29 July 1998. The meeting discussed cooperation for conflict prevention, focusing on the challenges of early warning, analysed the capabilities of the United Nations and regional organizations to meet those challenges, and assessed the practical modalities for collaborative interaction.

8. The Department also organizes meetings with States members of the Group of African States in New York to brief them on priority issues of common concern and to exchange ideas and information. Arrangements have been made to ensure that such briefings and exchanges are held regularly, in close consultation with the Permanent Observer for OAU to the United Nations, to address issues of concern expeditiously and to facilitate any follow-up action that may be required.

9. There are ongoing contacts and consultations between the Department and the office of the Permanent Observer. Such coordination and exchange of information is deemed vital to the effort to strengthen and rationalize United Nations-OAU cooperation. To that end, the Department and the office have agreed to hold monthly meetings to exchange information and to facilitate the coordination of actions and initiatives.

10. In order to further promote common understanding between the United Nations and OAU on current situations in Africa, the Department in April 1999 facilitated a meeting, arranged by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in New York of senior officials of the OAU secretariat with various United Nations departments. This meeting enabled the OAU delegation to exchange views with their United Nations counterparts on key issues relating to the management of some of the conflicts in the region, while the Department was able to consult with OAU on the division of responsibility and the best approach to the management of conflicts.

11. The relationship between the United Nations and OAU, especially in conflict prevention, peacemaking and conflict resolution, has expanded tremendously in the year under review. The two consult before taking any major initiatives in Africa and coordinate their activities closely. The United Nations Secretary-General holds frequent consultations with his OAU counterpart on conflicts in Africa while his special envoys and representatives also work closely with OAU. The participation of United Nations officials together with their regional counterparts in these meetings helps to enhance peace initiatives in the African region, including the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and between Ethiopia and Eritrea. United Nations special envoys work closely with OAU at every stage of the negotiation of the conflicts and United Nations technical experts contributed to the design of the modalities for the implementation of the peace agreements to bring those conflicts to a successful conclusion. The United Nations is also involved in the successful mobilization of resources and implementation of peace agreements in Africa. For example, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Peace Process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is assisting with the mobilization of resources for the work of the Joint Military Commission and for the implementation of other aspects of the peace process.

12. Important progress has been made to coordinate activities between the United Nations and OAU at the operational level. Nonetheless, the Secretariat will redouble its efforts to ensure that concrete measures are implemented to support the efforts of OAU in the area of peace and security.

B. Department of Peacekeeping Operations

13. The Security Council and the General Assembly have on several occasions expressed their support for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and OAU. Accordingly, the Department continues to provide much-needed partnership and support for peacekeeping activities in Africa through coordination of the efforts of the two organizations in ongoing peacekeeping operations, contingency planning for possible deployments, and assistance in building African capacities to carry out future peacekeeping missions.

14. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has continued its cooperation with OAU in its efforts to complete the identification and appeals processes, in implementation of the United Nations Settlement Plan for the organization and conduct of the referendum on self-determination for Western Sahara.

Planning for new missions

15. United Nations peacekeeping experts have been closely coordinating efforts with their OAU counterparts, including through exchanges of delegations to their respective headquarters and participation in extensive discussions to prepare contingency plans for the Lusaka Agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the OAU Framework Agreement for the settlement of the dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Close cooperation

with OAU will continue to be crucial as the two organizations move to deploy their staff in the field to implement the provisions of these two peace agreements.

16. At the special meeting convened by the Department on 21 January 1999 in coordination with OAU, 51 participants, including 27 African States, discussed ways to implement the recommendations on enhancing African peacekeeping capacities. They expressed broad support for the United Nations proposals for training and information exchange and undertook to consider the establishment of a regular forum for strengthening coordination, better utilization of resources and follow-up action. The Secretariat intends to finalize the terms of reference of the proposed group and, in consultation with OAU, the Group of African States at the United Nations and donor countries, make the arrangements for the convening of the formal meeting of the proposed group.

17. The United Nations and OAU have been working on a staff exchange programme which in the past has included visits to OAU headquarters by the chiefs of the Department's Situation Centre and the Policy Analysis Unit. During the latest visit, the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Africa were discussed. Discussions are under way as to the feasibility of arranging the secondment of personnel to the Situation Centre and the OAU Conflict Management Centre.

18. In cooperation with OAU, the Department has undertaken to serve as a clearing house for information on enhancing African peacekeeping capabilities on the basis of universality, transparency and non-discrimination. Some important information concerning training and other assistance has already been received from Member States which the Department has posted on the Internet. Additional resources and improved response from Member States would be required to develop and regularly update this important database.

19. The United Nations has established the Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa. The Fund has been used over the last two years to support numerous training activities of the Department. The OAU has on its part established a Peace Fund to assist in building African peacekeeping capacities. The Secretary-General has repeatedly urged Member States to contribute to these Funds.

20. The successful completion of many of the initiatives that the United Nations has taken, some of which were described above, and further development of similar efforts to strengthen cooperation with OAU and African subregional organizations and to enhance African peacekeeping capacities, will obviously depend on the availability of adequate resources. The Secretary-General, in his report on Africa to the Security Council of 25 September 1999 (S/1999/1008), indicated that resources for the development of African peacekeeping capacities was a major concern. In this regard, the Secretary-General appeals to Member States to be generous and to provide support, bilaterally or multilaterally, including through contributions to the Trust Funds. This priority will also be reflected in the coming budgetary submissions of the Secretariat.

C. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

21. One year ago, OCHA put in place a capacity within the United Nations liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa in order to improve coordination with OAU in the humanitarian field. The OCHA office has taken active part in the liaison functions of the United Nations office and has been particularly concerned with such issues as humanitarian access to the victims of conflict, contingency planning for assistance to internally displaced persons and mine awareness.

22. Since the establishment of the OCHA office, interaction between OCHA and the OAU secretariat has increased. OAU has requested support from OCHA in developing its institutional facilities for humanitarian coordination and exchange of information for early warning.

D. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

23. In accordance with the recommendations made at the meeting in Addis Ababa in May 1998, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has this year undertaken measures in support of the efforts of OAU.

24. OHCHR provided expertise and financial support to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights for the first African Ministerial Conference on Human Rights, which took place in Mauritius from 12 to 16 April 1999. The High Commissioner attended.

25. OHCHR supported the third session of the working group of the African Commission on the draft protocol to the African Charter regarding the protection of women in Africa (Dakar, June 1999) and the convening of a seminar on the right to fair trial in Africa (Dakar, 9-11 September 1999). OHCHR is also providing assistance to the project on the

elaboration of a manual on the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights.

26. At the invitation of OAU and the Government of Algeria, the High Commissioner attended the thirty-fifth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, which was held in Algiers from 12 to 16 July 1999, where she consulted with various African leaders.

IV. Cooperation in the field of economic and social development

A. Department of Economic and Social Affairs

27. During the period under consideration, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and OAU continued their interaction through informal consultations and exchanges of information. The main activities undertaken are described below.

Participation of OAU in activities organized or co-organized by the Department

28. A meeting was convened by the United Nations for representatives of States members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) in New York in September 1998 as a follow-up to the 1998 report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on conflict in Africa.

29. The Secretary-General convened a meeting of leading African experts in New York in October 1998 in preparation for the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) co-organized by the United Nations, the Government of Japan and the Global Coalition for Africa. OAU was a member of the Preparatory Committee and of the forum on Asian-African cooperation in export promotion organized by the Department and the Government of the Republic of Korea in Seoul in December 1998.

30. In addition, the eighth meeting of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Steering Committee of the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa (UNSIA), held in May 1999 in New York, recommended that both OAU and the African Development Bank be invited as observers to future meetings as part of the effort to promote African leadership of the Initiative. In line with the emphasis of the Special Initiative on achieving synergies with other organizations, OAU is already involved in the implementation of governance programmes in Africa.

B. Economic Commission for Africa

31. The Economic and Social Commission of the African Economic Community (AEC) at its third ministerial meeting held in Addis Ababa in June 1999 declared the launching of the second phase of the establishment of the Community. For its part, during the period under review the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) contributed to the consolidation of the process.

32. First, ECA pursued the execution of project RAF/94/008, "Promotion of economic integration through the establishment of the AEC". In that respect, the first-generation draft protocols were prepared by a team of consultants between September and November 1998 for the operationalization of the Abuja Treaty establishing AEC. A first workshop was organized in May 1999 and upon its recommendation, the first meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Transport, Communications and Tourism, held at the ministerial level, adopted the draft protocol on cooperation in transport, communications and tourism.

33. ECA also participated in September 1998 in the first session of the Committee of Officials of the Joint OAU/ECA/ADB Secretariat and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The meeting proposed some measures for improving interaction between AEC and RECs.

34. Furthermore, as the receiving institution, ECA organized the Ninth Consultative Meeting of the Chief Executives of OAU, ADB and ECA held in Ouagadougou on February 1999. The meeting followed a meeting of the Joint Secretariat and agreed on activities to be carried out in 1999 by the three institutions in support of AEC.

35. Finally, ECA is part of a research and training programme to be undertaken jointly by an ECA-OAU and REC team of researchers on "Trade liberalization and regional integration" and on "Regional integration in the scheme of the multilateral trade systems".

36. ECA-OAU cooperation in Africa's industrial development culminated in the launching of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA). ECA has been collaborating with OAU in the preparation of the following projects: the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI); the Conference on Industrial

Partnerships and Investments; and the meeting of the group of Alliance for Africa's Industrialization (AAI) patrons.

37. Other activities in the context of ECA-OAU collaboration included consultations to develop a working relationship and programme for civil society organizations and to organize a forum to address the issue of good governance in Africa. In this respect, ECA held extensive consultations with OAU on the preparation and hosting of the conference entitled "Governance in Africa: consolidating the institutional foundations", held in Addis Ababa in March 1998, and collaboration in the organization of the joint ECA-OAU colloquium entitled "Role of the African military in political transition and economic development" held in May 1998 in Addis Ababa.

38. Another area where OAU and ECA coordinated their views was TICAD II. The two organizations consulted on the preparations for the conference by assessing jointly the outcome of TICAD I and proposing Africa's objectives for TICAD II. OAU also participated actively in the three preparatory meetings for TICAD II. The meeting of the Joint Secretariat held in February 1999 in Ouagadougou agreed on modalities for the operationalization of the consensus reached at TICAD II, to be proposed to Africa's partners. Currently, with a grant from the Government of Japan as part of the TICAD process, ECA is implementing a project on strengthening subregional integration programmes launched by the RECs to form a basis for AEC.

C. United Nations Development Programme

39. UNDP support to OAU under the second and third regional programmes for Africa focused mainly on promoting regional economic integration arising from the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action and on institutional capabilities of the OAU secretariat. Under the fourth and fifth programming cycles, UNDP continued to extend support to the strengthening of the OAU secretariat through capacity-building and management development. Assistance to the establishment of the Women in Development Unit within OAU also figured among the projects that were implemented during the cycle.

40. Significant progress has been made in the production of several outputs such as the computerization of the OAU departments, the modernization of its Archives Unit, the completion of basic studies for rationalization of ECA-sponsored institutions and staff training. Also under the auspices of the programme, meetings were held within the OAU and with RECs in the form of policy dialogues aimed at reaching a common understanding on strategies and approaches to various aspects of the implementation of the Treaty establishing AEC, particularly the drafting of protocols, the popularization of the Treaty, and coordination and harmonization of the programmes of the RECs.

41. Also through this programme, UNDP is responding, in a timely manner, to the request for support for the European Union — African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (EU-ACP) Negotiating Group, in line with the mandate given to OAU by its Assembly of Heads of State and Government which met in 1998 in Ouagadougou. As in the past, it will be the policy of UNDP to pursue its assistance in the building of AEC using the cooperative framework for policy dialogue existing between the two institutions.

42. The project RAF/97/028, "Capacity-building for OAU conflict prevention, management and resolution" (UNDP contribution: US$ 3 million) is an ongoing project signed in July 1997 at the OAU secretariat. The project's objectives are to contribute to the effective operation of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution through human resources development and strengthened information systems. It aims to enhance the capacity of the Central Organ, the secretariat and the Conflict Management Division in preventive diplomacy, resource mobilization and analytical and operational performance.

43. In the implementation of the project, effort is being made to install an information support system. An OAU Web site was created in June 1998 and an information support infrastructure has been designed jointly with the programme on the establishment of AEC. Equipment for the network has been delivered and will be installed soon.

44. Early-warning experts and conflict information analysts who will work in the OAU Conflict Management Division are being put at the disposal of OAU until in-house staff are adequately trained. A resource mobilization expert to organize a round table conference for the purpose of replenishing the OAU Peace Fund is also being recruited.

45. OAU youth clubs and identified women's organizations are expected to embark on an advocacy programme with a view to fostering conflict awareness and peace in Africa.

46. The UNDP Regional Gender Programme is dedicated to supporting countries to mainstream gender into policy and practice and to the advancement of women, politically and economically. A major thrust is towards moving women into leadership positions, based on the understanding that the entry of able and aware women in sufficient numbers helps

to transform development priorities, thereby helping to reduce sources of tension and open conflict. The programme has incorporated some of the lessons learned from the impact of conflict and crisis on development efforts and particularly on women. It therefore has a strong focus on supporting women's peace initiatives and efforts to ensure that women participate, in both numbers and influence, in peace negotiations, conflict resolution and all peace processes. At present, the programme is supporting the Federation of African Women's Peace Networks, a collective of non-governmental women's peace movements from 20 African countries.

47. Besides support to post-conflict reconstruction in countries emerging from conflicts such as Angola, Comoros, Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, in its efforts to develop a more targeted and effective response to the crucial challenge faced by countries in special development situations UNDP Africa appointed, in October 1998, a Regional Adviser on Peace for Development as part of the "special team on African recovery" stationed in Addis Ababa. The primary role of the Regional Adviser is to provide the conceptual framework and resource centre to ensure that, where circumstances demand, UNDP initiatives become more targeted to support and complement regional and international efforts to achieve peace and development.

D. United Nations Population Fund

48. Population issues are one of the major concerns of African Governments because of their importance to the achievement of sustainable socio-economic development in the region. This concern has been expressed in their adoption of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration of the Third African Regional Population Conference (Dakar, December 1992), adoption of a resolution on population and development by the OAU Council of Ministers (Tunis, June 1994), and the TICAD II preparatory meeting which identified population as one of the priority areas of social development. The measure of support given by the African countries to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994 was also a reflection of this concern.

49. UNFPA, as the lead United Nations organization for the follow-up to and implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, is fully committed to working in partnership with Governments, all parts of the United Nations system, regional institutions, bilateral aid agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society. In line with this commitment, UNFPA has supported the implementation of population programmes in Africa in collaboration with OAU, mainly through the OAU Population and Development Policies and Programmes Initiative.

50. Under this initiative, UNFPA collaborates with OAU to promote the formulation and implementation of comprehensive population policies and integration of population factors into national development plans and strategies in OAU member States by strengthening OAU capacity to advocate for population policies. One direct outcome of the collaboration has been the establishment of the OAU Population and Development Unit which serves as the technical arm. The Unit has been instrumental in the training of OAU staff in population issues and in the organization of seminars/workshops and round table discussions for the African diplomatic community in Addis Ababa on selected population and development topics. The support has also helped to produce information, education and communications (IEC) materials/messages for use in sensitization efforts in member States.

51. Another outcome of the collaboration has been the support provided by UNFPA for the establishment of the African Population Commission which brings together representatives from population commissions/councils to share experiences on ICPD implementation in the region, to discuss emerging issues, to find solutions to implementation problems and chart a course for the future.

52. A review of the African experiences on the implementation of the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the ICPD Programme of Action was undertaken jointly by the Joint ECA/OAU/ADB Secretariat and UNFPA in September 1998. The review showed that considerable progress has been made. Several countries, including the United Republic of Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Benin, Mozambique, Uganda, Mali, South Africa, Burkina Faso and Senegal, have undertaken a broad range of actions in the areas of population policies, gender equality, reproductive rights and reproductive health, and partnerships with civil society. Countries have also redesigned their population policies and programmes to reflect the ICPD goals and recommendations. Important illustrations of the progress made have been the adoption of legislation outlawing female genital mutilation in countries like Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal and the abrogation in many countries of laws banning the advertisement and distribution of contraceptives.

53. UNFPA plays an important role in the task force (OAU, ADB, ECA, UNFPA) set up to reinforce the coordination/collaboration among these institutions, as well as to review advocacy activities and to assist in resource

mobilization for population and development activities in the region.

E. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

54. This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the OAU Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the OAU/UNHCR Cooperation Agreement. This dual anniversary provides an opportunity for OAU and UNHCR, in collaboration with the international community, to review the achievements and challenges with respect to forced population displacement in Africa and to explore new opportunities to address the continent's refugee problem. A number of activities have been carried out at the national and regional levels to commemorate the anniversary of the OAU Convention, including the launching of the OAU Award for Outstanding Service to Refugee and Displaced Persons in Africa at the OAU summit in Algiers in July 1999. Other activities include a joint statement by the High Commissioner and the OAU Secretary-General, the holding of a panel discussion on refugee challenges in Africa, and the convening of a joint OAU-UNHCR experts' meeting on the OAU Convention and its implementation, scheduled to take place in Conakry at the end of 1999.

55. With regard to the Cooperation Agreement, it has been proposed to hold a meeting between relevant division/units of OAU and UNHCR to review and revise the Agreement. A draft annotated agenda has been prepared and submitted to OAU and Headquarters for consideration.

56. The OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displace Persons held in Khartoum in December 1998, the first continent-wide forum on refugees and displaced persons since the 1979 Conference on the Situation of Refugees in Africa (Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania), was part of a process aimed at addressing Africa's refugee and forced displacement problems. A OAU/UNHCR joint secretariat was formed to prepare the papers to be presented at the meeting in Khartoum. Other preparatory activities included the convening of a UNHCR/Brooking Institute/ OAU Workshop on Internal Displacement in Africa in October 1998, and UNHCR support and assistance to missions of the OAU Commission on Refugees from October to December 1998. Building on the momentum of the Ministerial Meeting, a OAU/UNHCR/ICRC task force was established in Addis Ababa in January 1999 to develop a strategy and a plan of action to ensure the follow-up to the declaration and the recommendations adopted at the Ministerial Meeting. These two documents provide an important framework for refugee protection and assistance in the years to come, and will serve to form the basis for a comprehensive plan of action to be adopted at the proposed OAU-UNHCR experts' meeting.

57. The first OAU Ministerial Conference on Human Rights in Africa, held in Mauritius in April 1999, provided UNHCR an opportunity to contribute to the human rights debate in Africa and to promote the important linkage between refugee protection and human rights. UNHCR will work with OAU and human rights actors to ensure the follow-up to the pertinent provisions of the Mauritius Declaration, as well as support other relevant recommendations concerning the expansion of OAU activities in human rights monitoring and the promotion of human rights and humanitarian law.

58. In the past three years UNHCR has intensified its support for OAU in the area of early warning and conflict prevention. Several missions have been undertaken with the aim of strengthening the capacity of the OAU's Refugee and Conflict Management Divisions, with particular emphasis on streamlining information and reporting and analysing conflicts. A comprehensive assessment of needs and requirements of OAU in early warning and conflict prevention would serve to determine the modalities for further UNHCR assistance in this area, and strengthen the linkage between conflict prevention and mitigation and forced displacement.

59. UNHCR is collaborating with OAU to further develop and implement the Programme of Action of the OAU Commission on Refugees, particularly in the areas of resource mobilization and advocacy on behalf of refugees in Africa.

60. UNHCR also works with the OAU Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. As chairman of this committee, UNHCR initiated a process of consultation with the members to expand the mandate and to enlarge the membership in order to make the Committee a more effective and relevant body in dealing with refugee issues, particularly at the field level. The consultations were fruitful and resulted in the adoption of new rules of procedure for the Committee. UNHCR and OAU are developing modalities to implement the recommendations adopted at the Committee's meetings in order to ensure better harmonization of refugee and humanitarian programmes, especially during emergency operations.

61. UNHCR continues to work with the relevant OAU divisions in following up the implementation of the

recommendations adopted by various conferences and meetings organized by OAU in areas of direct relevance to the work of UNHCR. This includes promoting awareness on issues concerning refugee children within the framework of the special committee, led by OAU and the Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, on children in armed conflict; and supporting and enhancing mechanisms to mainstream women and gender perspectives in the peace-building and conflict resolution initiatives of regional organizations, as a follow-up to the global and regional platforms of action on women as well as other recent initiatives, such as the African Committee on Peace and Development.

F. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

62. During the period under review, intensive and regular consultations have taken place between the secretariats of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and OAU in Geneva.

63. In May 1999, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between UNCTAD and OAU to enhance cooperation between the two organizations in the following areas: (a) regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration; (b) resource flows and debt; (c) international trade; and (d) commodities. According to the MOU, periodic consultations will take place between the designated officials of the two organizations in order to enhance coordination and cooperation in the aforementioned areas.

64. UNCTAD organized a coordinating workshop for senior advisers to Ministers of Trade in least developed countries (LDCs) in June 1999 in Sun City, South Africa. The OAU also participated in the meeting along with other regional organizations. The meeting adopted a communiqué, conclusions and proposals for a comprehensive new plan of action for integrating LDCs in the global economy. The proposals were submitted to the General Council of the World Trade Organization on 7 July 1999.

65. UNCTAD, in collaboration with the OAU/AEC secretariat, the Government of South Africa and UNDP, also organized a workshop on developing a proactive and coherent trade agenda for African countries in support of their participation in international trade negotiations. The workshop, which took place in Pretoria from 29 June to 2 July 1999, was organized within the framework of the programme mandated by the General Assembly to support the developing countries in drawing up a "positive agenda" for future negotiations and in the spirit of the MOU between UNCTAD and OAU/AEC.

66. The elements identified in the above workshops formed part of the inputs into the meeting organized by OAU/AEC and ECA in Addis Ababa from 21 to 23 July 1999 to formulate a synthesized African negotiating strategy for the third WTO Ministerial Conference and the tenth Conference (UNCTAD-X).

67. UNCTAD and OAU are co-implementing agencies for the "fast track" module on support for ongoing multilateral negotiations under the UNDP programme for capacity-building for trade and development in Africa. Four subregional seminars are being organized in Africa this year with OAU under the umbrella of the secretariats of the RECs to assist the member States of these organizations in their preparations for the WTO Ministerial Conference.

68. At the request of the OAU and League of Arab States (LAS), UNCTAD sent a mission to Ouagadougou to take part in the second Afro-Arab Business Week which was held on October/November 1998 and to participate in the "Cooperation Forum" which took place during the Business Week. Following the third Afro-Arab Trade Fair (United Arab Emirates, December 1997), UNCTAD was requested by the OAU secretariat and LAS to assist in the preparations for the fourth Afro-Arab Trade Fair which was held in Dakar in April 1999. The UNCTAD secretariat was actively involved in the preparations for the Trade Fair, taking part in the Preparatory Committee meetings held in May and October 1998 and January 1999. During the Trade Fair itself, UNCTAD participated in the "Cooperation Forum" on trade issues and organized meetings for non-governmental organizations on trade issues preparations for UNCTAD-X, specific issues of interest to the African and Arab business communities in the area of investment, and preparations for the WTO Ministerial Conference.

69. OAU was invited to the conference on economic development and regional dynamics in Africa: lessons from the East Asian experience, organized by UNCTAD in Mauritius in September 1998.

70. UNCTAD co-sponsored, along with OAU and a number of other agencies, the Forum on the future competitiveness of African economies which was held in Dakar in March 1999.

71. OAU participated actively and chaired one session of the African regional symposium on trade liberalization and diversification of the agricultural sector which was organized by UNCTAD in Abidjan on May 1999.

G. International Labour Organization

72. In order to implement General Assembly resolution 53/91, the ILO has implemented programmes relevant to the following crucial issues: poverty eradication, employment promotion, enhancement of tripartism and human rights, elimination of child labour, protection of migrant workers, action in respect of conflict-affected countries and vocational rehabilitation.

73. ILO is engaged in assessing the employment situation in the African region and analytical reports have been submitted to the annual ordinary session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission. Recommendations emerging from the deliberations of the Commission have guided the formulation of major policies and programmes in many African countries. In addition, ILO continued to serve as the technical secretariat of the Southern African Labour Commission (SALC). The ILO Jobs for Africa Programme which started operating towards the end of 1998 constituted a significant endeavour with respect to employment creation in Africa. ILO, OAU and UNDP Africa organized a joint donors meeting in April 1999 in Windhoek, for resource mobilization for this project.

74. With respect to the defence of human rights and the application of international labour standards, a major aspect of ILO's cooperation with OAU is technical cooperation aimed at enhancing the implementation and ratification of international norms and conventions. ILO provided technical assistance in strengthening tripartism within the work of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission and the SALC.

75. ILO also continued to make significant financial and technical contributions to the work of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and the Pan African Employers Confederation (PEC), both of which have very close working relations with OAU. It participated in the OATUU/ILO workshop on social dialogue and tripartism held in Windhoek from 8 to 25 April 1999 and contributed papers on follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the draft Convention on Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The approved Convention, No. 182, was submitted to the OAU summit in Algiers in July 1999 and got the summit's endorsement.

76. ILO has also been collaborating with OAU in order: (a) to implement labour market policies and programmes supportive of productive and freely chosen employment, especially in areas prone to migration; (b) for migrant-receiving countries to contribute more to the acceleration of the development process in migrant-sending countries; and (c) to facilitate integration of migrant workers into the labour market and their participation in trade union activities.

77. In regard to action in conflict-affected countries, ILO launched a two-year global action programme for skills and entrepreneurship training for countries emerging from armed conflict. The programme has generated research data and lessons from country studies which will no doubt form a basis for future joint ILO/OAU action. A project, entitled "Employment for peace in Africa", was finalized in early 1999 for joint action with OAU/ECA and individual African countries.

78. Vocational rehabilitation is another important area of ILO/OAU cooperation. The cooperation takes the form of assistance to OAU through its African Regional Rehabilitation Institute where ILO provides technical guidance and assistance for the formulation and implementation of disability policies.

H. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

79. During the period under review and within the context of the UNESCO-OAU cooperation agreement of 1968, OAU and UNESCO continued their cooperation in the areas of education, culture, communication, science and the culture of peace.

80. In the area of education, UNESCO carried out the following activities: (a) contributed to the development of the Programme of Action of the OAU Decade of Education in Africa (1997-2006) (UNESCO is a member of the Steering Committee for the Decade); (b) contributed financially and technically to the organization of and follow-up to the Conference of African Ministers of Education (COMEDAF I) which OAU organized in Harare (March 1999); (c) in order to coordinate the various initiatives in the field of education in Africa, adopted with OAU a joint mechanism to coordinate the OAU Decade of Education, the recommendations of COMEDAF I and the recommendations of the seventh Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF) held in Durban, South Africa, in April 1998; (d) created synergy between the Decade and the Education for African children, component of United Nations system-wide Special Initiative on Africa, for which UNESCO is the lead organization, and provided a framework agreement for all education initiatives in Africa under the Initiative to be brought under the same umbrella.

81. In the area of communication, UNESCO participated in the preparations of the first African development forum

which was organized by OAU and the AEC on the challenges of globalization and the computer era, particularly in the field of infoethnics, community access to information, increasing women's participation in the information society, good governance and new communication technologies. UNESCO is also participating in technical preparations for the establishment of a United Nations-OAU inter-agency centre for exchange of information.

82. In the area of culture, UNESCO is a member of the technical committee for publication of a cultural atlas of Africa and a pan-African guide to civic education. It is cooperating on the project to establish an Afro-Arab Cultural Institute and also on the intercultural "Slave Route" and "Iron Road" projects.

83. On the subject of the culture of peace, the final touches are being put to an OAU-UNESCO programme of action, and consultations are continuing between UNESCO and the OAU Conflict Management Centre on the possibility of setting up national culture of peace networks in Africa with a view to gathering the information needed to prevent conflicts, develop programmes of education and training for democracy, human rights and peace and improve traditional methods of promoting peace. OAU and UNESCO cooperated in an OAU-run seminar on cultures and conflicts in Africa which was held in September 1999.

84. OAU-UNESCO cooperation is sustained through regular consultation and working meetings between the two organizations. Within this framework, a meeting was held in Paris on 1 June 1999 to review cooperation since the sixth meeting of the UNESCO-OAU Joint Committee. The review exercise made it possible to identify the priority joint actions which should be finalized or taken between now and the seventh meeting of the Joint Committee. At its thirty-fifth ordinary session, the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government requested the Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of OAU to review the 1968 agreement on cooperation between the two organizations with a view to strengthening it.

85. In the area of science and technology, at that same session the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, recalling the establishment in 1994 of the International Fund for the Technological Development of Africa, totalling US$ 1 million, requested the Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of OAU to pursue initiatives aimed at encouraging the African States to mobilize resources for the Fund. It also invited them to take initiatives to encourage the African States to allocate 3 per cent of the resources which they obtained from UNDP to the development of science and technology in Africa.

86. As part of the international partnership against HIV/AIDS in Africa, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General of OAU, in collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNESCO, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), to take all appropriate steps to implement, in a coordinated manner, the activities of the new partnership and to provide the technical and financial assistance needed to successfully combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic to the benefit of the member States.

I. World Health Organization

87. In order to facilitate the realization of the objectives of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, WHO has supported the implementation of major OAU health-related decisions.

88. As requested by the sixty-seventh ordinary session of the Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa on February 1998, WHO has assisted OAU member States in developing and implementing policies to combat drug problems.

89. As requested by the twenty-second ordinary session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission held in Windhoek on April 1999, WHO, in collaboration with OAU, is in the process of undertaking an in-depth study on the impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa and its linkage to child labour. A report focusing on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the productive potential of the youth labour force is expected at the forthcoming twenty-third ordinary session of the Commission.

90. Within the framework of the resolution adopted by the forty-ninth World Health Assembly in May 1999 calling on the Director-General to initiate the development of an international framework convention for tobacco control in accordance with Article 19 of the WHO Constitution, WHO has collaborated with OAU in the efforts to draw attention of OAU heads of State and Government to the tobacco epidemic as a cause of death and disability. In this respect, WHO is facilitating and encouraging OAU member States to strengthen their own national tobacco control policies on tobacco smuggling, advertising, pricing and taxation with a view to achieving the objectives of the Tobacco Free Initiative. World No-Tobacco Days 1998 and 1999 have been observed throughout OAU member States.

91. Further to its strategic work plan for 1998/99, WHO is developing a functioning partnership with OAU to undertake responsible advocacy for the African Initiative for Malaria Control and the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) — A Global Partnership approach to reducing malaria-related suffering by giving support to African countries to develop implementation plans to meet the overall objectives of RBM.

92. WHO has been requested by OAU to work with the International Atomic Energy Agency on the use of isotopes for identification of drug-resistant mutations of malaria, tuberculosis and brucellosis pathogen agents.

93. WHO cooperated with OAU in the preparation of the Sixth Conference of African Ministers of Health by providing technical papers for the meeting held in Cairo in October 1999.

94. Under the restructuring reforms at its headquarters level in Geneva, WHO is broadening the scope of the WHO office in Addis Ababa to include the RECs in liaison with WHO officers in New York and Brussels.

J. World Bank

95. The World Bank and OAU are progressively enhancing their collaboration. OAU's Economic Development and Cooperation Department (EDECO) has access to the World Bank Africa Live Database (LDB) to improve its own database and analytical policy work, particularly regarding the realization and development of the AEC. The new partnership for capacity-building will be an area for close collaboration. The World Bank and OAU are cooperating with other key African institutions in a set of studies of trends, challenges and opportunities as Africa enters the twenty-first century.

96. During the year, there were reciprocal visits at high levels, OAU participated in the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund while the Secretary-General of OAU was a guest speaker at a conference on gender and law held at the World Bank in Washington. The manager of the Bank's Africa Region's Partnerships Group visited OAU headquarters and had discussions with the Assistant Secretary-General responsible for EDECO on ways to deepen the partnership between the two institutions.

97. The World Bank also served on the Steering Committee of the Policy Analysis Unit (PASU) which was sponsored by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) based in Harare and which helped the RECs with capacity-building and training activities since these were the building blocks of the AEC.

K. International Monetary Fund

98. The Fund continued to cooperate with OAU through direct contacts with the OAU secretariat, through its interaction with OAU member States that are also Fund members and with the United Nations through contacts between the Director of the Fund's Office at the United Nations and the OAU Steering Committee. The cooperation takes the form of policy advice and surveillance, financial assistance, external debt and aid coordination and technical assistance.

99. The Fund has maintained and intensified its dialogue with OAU in the form of high-level meetings; accreditation of a Fund representative to the OAU secretariat; participation in conferences and various forums on economic issues; regular attendance as observers at meetings of the OAU summits. In addressing the thirty-second Summit in Yaoundé in July 1996 and the thirty-fourth summit in Ouagadougou in June 1998, the Managing Director stressed the Fund's commitment to a close partnership with OAU in advancing Africa's development. The Fund also was represented by two senior officials as observers at the thirty-fifth summit in Algiers.

100. Through its regular consultations with OAU member States, the Fund continually provides policy advice in performing its mandated surveillance functions and assists the national authorities in the design of adjustment programmes that could be supported by the Fund. The Fund provides extensive technical assistance to OAU members with a view to strengthening their capacity for macroeconomic management. The Fund has also deepened its collaboration with ECA. It participated at a high level in the Joint Conference of African Ministers of Finance and Ministers of Economic Development and Planning organized by ECA in Addis Ababa in May 1999. The Fund has further intensified its relations with various regional economic organizations.

L. World Intellectual Property Organization

101. In October 1998, WIPO invited the Assistant Executive Secretary of the OAU Geneva Office to participate in the introductory course on industrial property held in Harare.

102. While organizing a national seminar in Ethiopia in November 1998, the WIPO delegation met with OAU officials and discussed cooperation between the two organizations in intellectual property matters.

103. In December 1998, WIPO participated in all the preparatory meetings of the organizing committee of the fourth Afro-Arab Trade Fair. In April 1999, WIPO participated in the Fair, in Dakar, by mounting its own stand and exhibition, awarded WIPO medals and cash prices to enterprises that use industrial property in their activities, and participated in the one-day Forum convened during the Fair.

104. In January 1999, WIPO made a financial contribution to OAU for the purpose of publishing a pamphlet on African inventors, winners of the OAU/WIPO gold medals (see para. 106 below).

105. At WIPO headquarters, in March/April 1999 OAU officials had discussions with their counterparts at WIPO on cooperation between the two organizations, the effect of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) on African countries, and the possible WIPO contribution to the forthcoming OAU Conference of African Ministers of Trade.

106. A WIPO delegation attended the seventieth ordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers and the thirty-fifth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Algiers. OAU/WIPO gold medals were presented to the best African inventors during the OAU summit.

107. WIPO sent a consultancy mission to the OAU Scientific, Technical and Research Commission (STRC) in August 1999 in Lagos, and to OAU headquarters to discuss indigenous knowledge and use of medicinal plants and traditional food crops in Africa.

M. International Fund for Agricultural Development

108. OAU member States are important recipients of IFAD assistance. As of December 1998, US$ 5,831 million had been allocated to 226 projects in OAU member States, of which US$ 2,307 million were provided by IFAD and US$ 3,523 through co-financing and from domestic sources.

109. In addition, as of December 1998, IFAD had provided 10 grants totalling US$ 12,754,435 to STRC. One of these grants, of US$ 1 million, was for research and development of food grains in semi-arid regions of Africa. The remainder were for the Agricultural Management Training Programme in Africa (AMTA). In 1994 and 1997, IFAD approved two grants totalling US$ 3,607,000 for NENAMTA, which is an extension of the AMTA programme for the Near East and North Africa regions.

110. Regular consultations have continued between IFAD and the OAU secretariat and indeed between the IFAD and OAU offices in New York and Geneva in the technical and political fields. At recent meetings, parties have discussed the opportunity of enhancing their cooperation by revising the present cooperation agreement between IFAD and OAU, in the light of emerging new priorities. It has been agreed that such exercise would lead to an agreement with more focus and a better strategic direction.

111. Moreover, OAU resolutions in support of IFAD replenishments and funding of special programmes for Africa have proved to be helpful. Some African heads of State, for example President Diouf of Senegal, have shown a direct interest in the Fund. Their expression of support has had an effective impact among donor countries.

N. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

112. The Director-General of UNIDO attended the thirty-fourth session of the OAU Council of Ministers, holding a large number of bilateral talks with the Ministers of Industry. He also made his first visits to a series of African countries including Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

113. Since its launch in October 1996, the Plan of Action of the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization (AAI) has served as a platform for African decision makers and the international community to evaluate the industrial development challenges facing the continent and its growing marginalization in global manufacturing.

114. A Plan of Action was endorsed by the Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI) in Accra in May 1997, by OAU in June and by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1997. Since August 1998, an effective institutional framework has been established in response to the OAU Harare Declaration to ensure African ownership of the Alliance.

115. The meeting of the AAI Steering Committee took place in Abidjan in September 1998. UNIDO attended the meeting to cement relationships within the Alliance framework with African Governments.

116. As a parallel event during the Steering Committee meeting, UNIDO/OAU/ECA organized a seminar on the impact of the East Asian crisis on African industry which was attended by scholars, policy makers and representatives from multilateral agencies.

V. Cooperation in other areas

A. Universal Postal Union

117. As was the case in the previous year, UPU continued to implement, within the framework of its technical assistance programme for the period 1996-2000, activities based on objectives and actions defined in the Treaty instituting the African Economic Community (art. 63) and its Protocol (art. 12) relating to the postal sector.

118. In this regard, UPU participated in May 1999 in the first OAU meeting of the Committee on Transport, Communications and Tourism held in Addis Ababa, whose main objective was precisely to lay down strategies for implementing the AEC.

119. In particular, UPU and OAU reviewed the present situation of postal services in Africa and defined measures to be taken in addressing the shortcomings observed.

120. The two organizations also drafted part of the Protocol on the Transport, Communications and Tourism Sector concerning postal services designed to implement the Treaty instituting the AEC.

121. UPU continued to take concrete measures to help the OAU member States to transform their postal services into efficient and business-oriented entities. The Union also provided assistance to certain OAU member States faced with a post-conflict situation, where vast measures of reconstruction were required.

B. United Nations Drug Control Programme

122. UNDCP has continued to cooperate and collaborate closely with OAU, particularly in the implementation of the OAU drug control action plan.

123. In preparation for the United Nations General Assembly twentieth special session on the world drug problem, which took place in New York in June 1998, an African common position on drugs was elaborated during a meeting of African experts held in March 1998, in collaboration with UNDCP. The African Common Position on Drugs was adopted at the twenty-first session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission, endorsed at the sixty-eighth session of the OAU Council of Ministers, and served as a guideline to reflect Africa's position during the work of the special session.

124. A second expert group meeting was held in March 1999, in collaboration with UNDCP, to review and update both the OAU Declaration and Plan of Action and the African Common Position on Drugs in the light of the outcome of the special session.

125. Apart from attending the special session, the staff of the OAU focal point for drugs participated in several training events and international meetings and conferences on drugs, including the General Assembly of the International Criminal Police Organization, the intergovernmental working group for the draft action plan on guiding principles on drug demand reduction and the second meeting of the coordinators of inter-ministerial drug control committees in West Africa held in Banjul in September 1998. The Banjul meetings were organized by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in collaboration with UNDCP and the Government of the Gambia to appraise the implementation of the West African regional plan of action for drug control and the status of the ECODRUG Fund adopted by ECOWAS meeting held in 1997 in Cape Verde.

126. Upon the invitation of the United Nations Secretary-General, the OAU Secretary-General agreed to be a member of the Committee of Wise Men established to tackle drug problems and which is expected to highlight Africa's concern for and the assistance required to combat the scourge of drugs on the African continent.

127. Initial contacts have been made with all the African Regional Economic Communities to organize, in collaboration with UNDCP, a workshop to discuss cooperation between OAU and the African RECs in the drug control field. The workshop is planned for September this year.

128. OAU also continued to work closely with the Centre for International Crime Prevention through the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) based in Kampala.